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VINDICATION OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT,

FOR THE COURSE PURSUED IN

SUBDUING THE SOUTHERN REBELLION,

DELIVERED IN

Marshall's Hall, Bridgetown, Barbadoes, British West Indies,

FEBRUARY 3, 1865,

BY

GEORGE ALKINS.

PHILADELPHIA :
H. G. LEISENRING'S STEAM PRINTING HOUSE,
No. 237 DOCK STREET.
1865.

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LECTURE

DELIVERED AT

BARBADOES, W. I., FEB. 3, 1865.



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

I appear before you to-night in the character of an American citizen. The name "*American citizen*," is one I am proud of. I say proud of, because I believe that while under the Aegis of the "Stars and Stripes," I am as safe, and entitled to the same protection, as under the glorious flag of Old England—the flag which, for a thousand years, has braved the battle and the breeze; that flag, which, wherever it appears, is entitled to, and receives respect; that flag which waves over dominions on which the sun never sets, and which is the emblem of freedom throughout the universe. The flag of the United States is also the emblem of freedom; and, thank God, is soon, I fully believe, to float over a whole and undivided Union—a Union cemented by the blood of those heroes and patriots who fought for, and obtained freedom, in the days that tried men's souls; in those good old days when the immortal Washington achieved a work, thought by many to be impossible. Long may that flag wave over the land of the free and the home of the brave!

The only blot on the escutcheon of the United States, is being fast removed—I refer to slavery in the South. Many thousands of the slaves have been made free by the war which is now going on; and which, I trust, will soon be over. General Sherman with his victorious legions, now holds and occupies the city of Savannah. Soon, I hope, the city of Charleston will fall into our hands. Next in order, perhaps, will be Richmond, which is encompassed by the armies of General U. S. Grant; or, as he has been termed, General Unconditional Surrender Grant. These two generals are worthy to fill a place beside the hero of Waterloo, the invincible Wellington. Now I do not wish you to understand by any remarks which may be made by me, that I glory in the war which has filled so many graves with warriors, both of the North and South; which has drenched the once happy and peaceful fields of America with fratricidal blood, which has caused, in many cases, the father and the brother to raise their hands against each other in deadly strife; as in the days of the Revolution—

“When sons against their fathers stood,
And children shed their parent’s blood;”

for I deplore as much as any man can, the unhappy state of things that now exists; but when the alternative of disunion or war was presented, I promptly accepted the latter, believing that a dismemberment of the States would be a far greater calamity than war. I still think so. “The ways of God are not as man’s ways; His judgments past finding out.” Both North and South have been, and are being punished by the Supreme Ruler of the universe, for the many sins they have committed. He is leading his people by ways which they have not known; and I trust, and hope, will ere long restore to them the blessings of peace. The South is getting tired of this war; the North wish it ended; our mother country—England—

wishes it closed. The whole world, in fact, I believe, wish for peace; and peace, I hope, will soon come. The dark clouds which have hung over our country, the land of my adoption, are fast breaking, and the light will soon appear. The South, I fully believe, would never have entered upon this war, but for the designing schemes of politicians; men who would sooner, to use, and perhaps it is rather a profane expression, "reign in hell than serve in heaven;" men who sought their own aggrandizement; men who wished to obtain the balance of power. Many of the political leaders of the South—extreme Southern States—long since boldly asserted, that each individual State possessed a sovereignty paramount to that of the united commonwealth of the Republic of the United States of America. Some, deluded by the artful sophistries of the subtle Calhoun, the apostle of the doctrine of State Rights, in avowing their political heresy, gave expression, it is believed, to an honest conviction: others, however, influenced by personal interests, sought only to gratify their ambition, or to soothe their disappointment, by creating a faction from which they hoped to obtain favors they had failed in extorting from the country.

In the meantime the people of the Southern States, with the exception, perhaps, of those of South Carolina, who had been misled by the persuasive plausibilities of their favorite, Calhoun, continued to cherish a patriotic sentiment of attachment to the Union. While the partisan leaders of the South were enabled, through the conciliatory concessions of northern politicians, to wield the political power of personal and sectional advantage, they shrewdly disguised their selfish designs beneath a mask of traditional regard for the Constitution of the United States.

The North grew restless under its subservience to Southern domination, manifesting a desire for emancipation; the partisan

leaders of the South became anxious lest they should lose the political mastery by which they had governed a nation in the interests of faction. The Southern leaders asserted their theory of State sovereignty with increased audacity, and threatened to exercise it to the destruction of the Union; hoping to frighten the Northern people, who were known to be fondly devoted to the united country, into renewed submission to Southern control.

The North rapidly gained in power through the natural increase of population and immense European immigration; the South endeavored to balance this growing ascendancy by an increase of slave States. Texas became annexed to the United States at the expense of a war with Mexico, and established a slave State. An intrigue, though it proved abortive, was set on foot to force Spain into the sale of Cuba.

The Missouri Compromise Act was abrogated for the purpose of admitting the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas as slaveholding States. The bloody strife which ensued between the friends of freedom, or the abolitionists, as they were then called, and the Southern slaveholders who had emigrated to those Territories with a view of perpetuating that curse of America, slavery, is familiar to all who perused the journals of that period. Thanks to an overruling Providence, Kansas became a free State.

The Republican party was now formed, which nominated John C. Fremont, the eminent explorer, for President, 17th June, 1856. He, although a native of South Carolina, was opposed to the extension of slavery, and in favor of free labor; but objected to any interference with the rights of the Southern States as secured by the Constitution of the United States. Stirring political contests now took place. Fremont was defeated! James Buchanan was elected President, and John C.

Breckenridge Vice President. Enough is known of the administration of Buchanan, both at home in the United States, and wherever the Northern papers were read, at the time of the Rebellion, to stamp it with that disgrace which it justly deserves.

We now pass on to 1858, when Senator Jefferson Davis, now the President of the self-styled Confederate States, boldly avowed, in a speech at Jackson, Missouri, insurrectionary sentiments; proving that the present Rebellion, of which he is the master spirit, had been with him for a long time a foregone conclusion.

The principles of the Republican party and its leaders were, at this time, studiously perverted by the Democracy, or rather that portion of the party who had not as yet been brought to see things in their true light; for some of the better Democrats had joined hands with us. The remnant declared that our object was the abolition of slavery, calling us Black Republicans, &c.; when at this time the sole object of the majority, at least, was to prohibit the extension of slavery in the Territories, and to prevent the spread of that moral plague any farther than it had already gone. The Southern people were deluded, particularly those of the sea ports, with magnificent prospects of a direct trade with Europe, by which the dwindling cities of the South could be swollen into the importance of Tyre and Carthage, enriched with the wealth of the whole commercial world.

President Buchanan we find bound in close ties of political sympathy with the prominent partisans of the Southern States, selecting his Cabinet from such men as we would call Northern dough-faces, and yielding his feeble will to their guidance.

The traitor, Floyd, who at this period, was Secretary of the Treasury, together with the Secretary at War, were doing all

they could to help on the approaching Rebellion. Our ships of war were sent off to distant stations, and ammunition and guns sent to the Southern forts.

On the 30th of November, 1859, a resolution was offered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, declaring that she, South Carolina, was ready to enter together with other slaveholding States, or such as desired prompt action, into the formation of a Southern Confederacy.

On the 25th of April, 1860, the National Democratic Convention assembled at Charleston, South Carolina. Caleb Cushing, of *Massachusetts*, was elected President. The platform adopted did not suit the South. Southern delegates withdrew and organized a Southern Convention, which met on May 3d. After ineffectual attempts, and failing to agree upon a candidate for the Presidency, it adjourned to meet at Richmond, Va. The Democratic National Convention adjourned to meet at Baltimore, Md. On the 13th of June, a number of delegates again withdrew. Those remaining nominated Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, for President, and Benjamin Fitzpatrick, of Alabama, for Vice President. The Seceders nominated John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky, then Vice President of the United States, for President, and Joseph Lane, of Oregon, for Vice President. These nominations were afterwards confirmed by the Convention at Richmond, Virginia.

A Constitutional Union Convention met at Baltimore on May 9th, and nominated John Bell, of Tennessee, for President, and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, for Vice President.

On the 16th of May, at Chicago, Illinois, the Convention of that now imposing party, the National Republican, met in convention, and nominated Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, for President, and Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, for Vice President.

Governor Letcher, of Virginia, at that early date, did not

fear to suggest treason, and declared in his message to the Legislature, "it is useless to attempt to conceal the fact, that in the present temper of the Southern people, it," (alluding to the probable election of Mr. Lincoln), "*cannot, and will not be submitted to.*"

On the 16th of November, 1860, Abraham Lincoln, the man chosen by God for this place, was elected President. His principles and character are too well known for me to add one word of praise or commendation.

For a long period the South had placed her sons in the Presidential chair, had filled the many fat offices under Government, and when the great Republican party in the North sprung into existence, feared they would lose the balance of power, which they had so long held.

The Southern people, who are well known to be brave and generous, would never, I say, have plunged into the fearful abyss of misery which has been opened by this Rebellion, but for the mad schemes of the *traitors* who led them into it. They see their error. Many States are now trying to bring about peace. The Vice President, Stephens, himself, has raised his voice in favor of peace; and although he has not yet got on the right track, he will, I hope, soon do so. Maryland has wheeled back into her old place. Indeed she never left it; although in the early days of the Rebellion she would have been dragged into the same position which the rebellious States now occupy, but the strong arm of Government held her back. She is the first of the Southern States in the glorious work of emancipation. Her slaves are now free. She is now no more "My Maryland," as the Southern song indicates, but "Our Maryland." Soon other States will follow her example, and the jubilee of freedom be sounded throughout the entire South. The South will then learn for the first time, that the laborer is

worthy of his hire; and prove, by experience, that they can obtain as much, if not more labor from the freedman than from the slave.

I will now attempt to give you a short history of the Rebellion from the time that Fort Sumter fell, to the time at which I left Philadelphia. You are doubtless aware, many of you, that James Buchanan was at that period President; the fearless and intrepid Anderson held and occupied Fort Moultrie; as he was threatened by the Charlestonians under General Beauregard, he thought it prudent and advisable to remove from that Fort, and occupy Fort Sumter, which he did under cover of the night, having first spiked the guns of Fort Moultrie; he reached Fort Sumter in safety with the gallant band of heroes who so long held that Fort against such fearful odds, and only surrendered when the place was in flames; even then he dictated terms to the victorious rebels, in that himself, officers, and men should be permitted to leave the Fort, not as prisoners of war, but with their arms, and the flag which they had fought so long and bravely to uphold. It may be asked why was the Fort fired upon, ? and some may say that it was in consequence of the Government persisting to send a steamer into the harbor. Why was this done? She was sent with provisions, &c., for the half-starved garrison which held the place. The Government had a perfect right to do so; she had a perfect right to send men and ammunition also. Was not that Fort, as well as all the other Forts, Government property? Would any one in this assemblage say that England had no power to reinforce her Forts or Garrisons at the West Indies, Canada, Ireland, or any other spot which she holds? I presume not. The steamer was fired on, and left the harbor; the Fort, as I have already stated, was bombarded and taken; that glorious old flag was fired on by those who ought to have done

all they could to protect it; this firing on the flag roused the spirit of the North, and united the people almost as one man. James Buchanan could have prevented all this had he chosen so to do, but he, weak old man, by the advice of his counselors, argued that he had no power to act. Did ever any sane man hear of such folly? If he had promptly sent a force of a few thousand men, and put down the outbreak in Charleston, as old England would have done, in all probability we should have been spared the horrid scenes which have since transpired; but no, this did not suit the schemes and designs of the Secretary of War and others who filled places in his Cabinet; they had been preparing the South for some time to raise its hands against the Government; our ships of war were dispatched to foreign countries; arms and ammunition from the North were plentifully supplied the South, under the pretext that the Southern Forts stood in need of such things. The sequel is easily guessed at; the South, elated with the fall of Sumter, rushed into the vortex of rebellion; one State after another was coaxed to join South Carolina, which State had been for many years concocting this plan; as far back as the time of General Jackson, she had tried nullification, but the brave and patriotic Southerner nipped this in the bud; he threatened to hang John C. Calhoun, the great Southern leader as high as Haman; and but for the interposition of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, would perhaps have done so; they generously interceded, and offered pacificatory measures, which were adopted, and the life of the Southern statesman was spared. Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, was a man who would have done what he said, and taken on himself the consequences, as he afterwards proved, by his breaking up the Bank of the United States. But to proceed. Soon after the fall of Sumter, the victorious leaders of the Rebellion threat-

ened to march on Washington, and had they known its weakness and done so, could perhaps have easily taken the capitol. If I remember rightly, the whole force of regulars in Washington did not exceed 1000. The militia of the Northern States would, however, have rushed to the rescue and retaken it. Thus commenced the greatest Rebellion, perhaps, which the world ever saw, and which has assumed such gigantic proportions, that the old countries look on with amazement and wonder at the immense armies which both North and South have put into the field. Bravely has the South fought; the great pity is, that they have been fighting in so bad a cause; what possible good could result to the South by disunion? the imaginary line which separated them would soon be crossed by the slaves; the North would not become slave-catchers, and give them up to the tender mercies of their owners; the result would be, that intestine wars would again drench the land with blood; it is an utter impossibility for North and South to maintain separate Governments, and to live peaceably together; this any reflecting mind will see to be impossible; how was it in the days of Wallace and Bruce, when such fearful contests took place between England and Scotland?

Now the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Ireland, and Scotland, or, as it is called, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, live in peace and harmony under the rule of the best sovereign that ever filled the throne, Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, the good Queen, the exemplary wife and mother. Were she to land on the shores of America—I speak more particularly of the Northern portion—she would have as great a reception as ever greeted her ears, as great a reception as if she were passing through her own dominions. The reception extended to her son, the Prince of Wales, proved what

the Northern people would do should she ever visit them herself; they knew not the youth, but for the sake of his mother they paid him as much respect as if he had been the President of the United States, perhaps more. Why did they do this? They felt that in him they beheld the representative of royalty; but more than this, they saw the son of one who has so wisely governed the mother country, that great country which gave birth to a Pitt, a Wellington, and a Nelson; that country from which they sprung. Who are Americans? Are they not the descendants of Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen? Does not the Anglo-Saxon blood flow in their veins? Why is it that they have such indomitable perseverance and energy? why such warriors? The answer is easily given; they are from good stock, from a mother that has yet to see the day when she ever turned her back to the foe; a nation whose armies are not afraid to stand the deadly shock of a charge of bayonets. There are other nations, perhaps, you may say, that will stand this. I contend that no two nations on the face of the globe, can compare in this respect with America and England.

But I am digressing from my subject; to return; Washington was saved, and the President issued his call for 75,000 volunteers, should have been, perhaps 500,000, but how could this be done, we had not the arms to equip them, and must wait until we could procure them. The North poured her legions forth; the army hastily organized, took the field. The battles which were fought on the soil of Virginia you are doubtless aware of; the North, or rather the Government was defeated. Why? Because the Southerners had been always a more warlike people, or rather had studied and practised the art of war more than the North; the latter always busy in money-making, had neglected to have such a regular system

of militia as the former ; in fact they did not, as they thought, require it ; experience has proved to the contrary. Our men fought well, but we wanted good officers ; some of the best had embraced the Rebel cause ; experience, however, has made us proficient, time has enabled us to equip and put into the field army after army, the exigency has raised up Generals and other officers, and the closing scenes of the Rebellion are being enacted ; the curtain, I trust, will soon fall on the dreadful tragedy which has been enacted ; soon may the Olive-branch be extended, and the once happy and united people of the North and South meet each other in fraternal embrace, bury the hatchet of discord, and assume the proud position they have so long occupied among the nations of the earth.

This war has developed a strength which we knew not that we possessed. We have a Navy nearly, if not quite equal to that of Great Britain, England, and America united ; can dictate terms to the world. Why should they not be united ? their interests and their connections demand it ; the ties which bind them together demand it ; the cause of liberty throughout the world demands it ; and although there may be hard things said on both sides, yet I feel that they will be so united ; God grant it. I hope not to live to see the day when it shall be otherwise. What, shall it be said that the two greatest nations on the face of the globe, nations so closely allied, speaking the same language, bound together both socially and commercially, shall ever be at variance ? never. I trust, never. We both have a great work yet to perform ; we have to evangelize those dark spots where the light of the Gospel of Truth has not yet penetrated ; we are fast accomplishing this ; look at India, China, Africa ; see what has been done for Liberia, the free republic of Africa ; see how it has grown under the fostering care of the United States and England ; much, however,

remains to be done, and we are to do it. Now one word as to the flags which are festooned around me. On my right hangs the flag of England, on my left the flag of America; the latter is that of my adoption, the former the one under which I was born. Now, although I should deplore any contest which may take place between the two great nations which they represent, yet I wish you to understand distinctly, that should the dread alternative of war come, my sympathies and active service would be with the United States.

I fear I have tired you with the feeble remarks which I have made. My aim and desire has been to give you a truthful, honest statement of facts so far as my memory has served me. If I have been able to accomplish the one object of putting things in relation to this Rebellion in a proper light before you, I am satisfied.

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